LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of Left Unity

Founded 1921 Editor: R. Palme Dutt

GOLDEN JUBILEE The Editor

ACT NOW TO SAVE THE UNIONS

Kevin Halpin Ken Brett

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNIONISM

T. F. McWhinnie

Dave Dixon on the Young Workers' Conference

Jürgen Kuczynski on Agrarian Crisis

Quaestor on the Polish-West German Treaty

JANUARY 1971

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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Notes of the Month

GOLDEN JUBILEE

'Are we doomed to provide Karl Marx with posthumous proof of his theory? Must the mixed economy, like a fully capitalist economy, perish from its own internal contradictions?'
'Can we Beat Karl Marx?', *Guardian*, November 9, 1970.

December 14, 1970

It moves. Britain, the classic land of capitalism and the earliest development of the organised working class movement, enters 1971 in the midst of manifest deepening contradictions of the decaying capitalist economy and intensifying class battle between the Tory Government and the organised working class. Before we come to these great issues there is a homely domestic matter on which we crave the indulgence of readers to say a few words.

Golden Jubilee

This year 1971 will see in July the fiftieth anniversary of continuous publication of *Labour Monthly*. In human affairs the completion of 25 years of continuity is regarded as a Silver Jubilee, such as the United Nations has recently been celebrating; the completion of 50 years as a Golden Jubilee; and the completion of 60 years as a Diamond Jubilee. Accordingly we ask the forgiveness of our readers that, before attempting to survey some of the great issues of the coming year, we take the opportunity to commemorate this Golden Jubilee year of our magazine, not just as a journalistic event, but because it carries a certain political significance which is not unconnected, in its limited fashion, with the great battles of our time now advancing to such a height of intensity. We acclaim at the same time the fiftieth anniversary in July 1971 of a heroic party, the Communist Party of South Africa.

Portent without Parallel

Subject to correction, there is possibly no parallel, past or present, in any capitalist country in the world to this unbroken publication for fifty years of a socialist journal, maintaining its independent economic existence entirely on the basis of the support of its readers; upholding from its first number half a century ago to the present an open consistent adherence to the principles of revolutionary Marxism, class solidarity and internationalism in its editorial line; and at the same time combining this with the widest range of contributors from outstanding progressive spokesmen in the trade

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union, labour and cultural fields, and consistently campaigning, also from our earliest numbers to the present, for the united co-operation of all on the left. During these years many well-known capitalist monthly journals have perished in the increasingly difficult conditions of this period, and given place to the new breed of organs subsidised by publishers for prestige or by wealthy patrons or from dubious sources. The fact that our journal has been able to cover its costs on the basis of sales to readers, supplemented by the precious Fund of donations from them, all publicly and individually acknowledged, is itself a fact of political significance. It means that this achievement of fifty years is not a mere achievement of a journal, but an expression of broad progressive co-operation. Our contributors from those early years, who did us the honour of writing specially and freely for our journal, have included such representative figures as Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells and Compton Mackenzie in the literary field; Tom Mann, A. J. Cook and most of the best-known leaders in the trade unions and the factories; George Lansbury, Pollitt, Cole, Laski and Brockway in the political labour movement; Rutland Boughton and Alan Bush in the field of music; Bernal in the field of science; Nehru, Gandhi, Azikwe, Cheddi Jagan, Klara Zetkin and Barbusse in the international field. In those days when our journal began there were then no bans to prevent broad co-operation among all sections in the socialist, trade union and labour movement. We hope to go forward to the time when every remaining ban to hinder co-operation of socialists and all on the side of progress for common aims shall be overcome, and when such co-operation shall go forward in the light of Marxism to the victory of socialism indissolubly united with the advance of the people and of socialism throughout the world.

Shadow of Karl Marx

As the contradictions of capitalism deepen in the present phase, and the realities of class confrontation and class struggle force themselves on the attention of all, not least in the old citadel of capitalism, Britain, the spokesmen of capitalism find themselves haunted by the shadow of Karl Marx. When the *Guardian* editorial writer, cited at the beginning of these Notes, posed the question under the title 'Can We Beat Karl Marx?', whether the 'mixed economy', must 'perish from its own internal contradictions' in the same way as 'a fully capitalist economy', he only showed that he was out of date in his definitions. The so-called 'mixed economy' in Britain or the United States is still 'a fully capitalist economy'.

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Engels nearly a century ago showed in his *Anti-Dühring* that 'the transformation, either into joint stock companies or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalist character of the productive forces.' Lenin carried forward this analysis into the twentieth century with his demonstration of the character of monopoly capitalism moving towards its culminating phase in state monopoly capitalism, when in 1917 he further developed his definition of imperialism as the era of monopoly capitalism, and stressed that imperialism was not only the epoch of giant monopolies, but 'the era of the development of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism.'

Contradictions of State Monopoly Capitalism

Lenin based this analysis on the preliminary forms which manifested themselves under the forcing-house conditions of the first world war. With his foresight of genius, made possible by his use of the instrument of Marxism, at a time when the leaders and economists of capitalism were wistfully looking for a return to 'normalcy' after the war, Lenin anticipated the future extending development of state monopoly capitalism as the dominant form of the culminating phase of capitalism. This development which Lenin anticipated swept forward universally in the major capitalist countries after the shattering blows of the world economic crisis and in face of the success of socialist planning. It has advanced to an extreme stage during the quarter of a century since 1945, reaching to the present phase of modern capitalism. The formula of the 'mixed economy' should confuse no one. Lenin always emphasised that state monopoly capitalism does not involve the disappearance of small-scale and medium-scale capitalism and commodity producers, but only their subordination to the giant monopolies integrated with the state. Every new phase of capitalism—and there are many new features in the present phase of modern capitalism which will require further study—needs to be analysed afresh in its concrete character. But the key to such analysis lies in the principles first elucidated by Marx and Lenin. This present most recent phase of modern capitalism, so far from having resolved the contradictions of capitalism, has on the contrary, as everyone is now beginning to realise, enormously enlarged their scale.

Capitalists Lash Out in Confusion

The extreme contradictions of the present phase of modern capitalism are producing a state of schizophrenia in the minds of

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its rulers and spokesmen. The principal Tory organ, the *Daily Telegraph*, in the intervals of exposing 'Red plots', or blaming the workers for the difficulties of the capitalist economy, during 1970 took the opportunity to excoriate the celebration of the Lenin Centenary Year, recognised by the United Nations, and deride the 'obsolete' theories of Marx and Lenin as completely 'disproved' by the miracles of modern capitalism. Simultaneously on an adjoining page in the issue of the same organ on May 27, 1970, their cartoonist Garland depicted the monument of Karl Marx in Highgate Cemetary with a smile on his face while alongside it a newspaper placard proclaimed 'Wall Street Hits Lowest Point For 8 Years'. Incidentally, this cartoonist, as often happens in these press organs, has from time to time used his jester's license to hit nearer the mark than his solemn pontifical colleagues. After the formation of the Heath Government he depicted an unhappy Britannia bound in agony to a stake while a monster Inflation surrounded by skulls of his victims advances with open jaws to devour her, and the gallant knight in armour Heath proclaims: 'Fair lady—I beseech thee, save thyself!' Similarly after Heath's Guildhall speech on November 16, the same cartoonist depicted the smiling face of Heath on an election poster, 'Vote Conservative—A Better Tomorrow!' and alongside the extract from his speech, 'The strategy upon which Ministers have embarked is a strategy which thinks not just in months, but in years'. The fact is that the present Tory rulers of capitalism, while they are ready to lash out against the workers in the most ferocious reactionary offensive for a century, and to adopt every measure and device to fill the pockets of the rich at the expense of the poor, are in hopeless confusion and cross-purposes to produce any policy capable of dealing with the immediate desperate economic situation of inflation, steeply rising prices, mounting unemployment and stagnation of industrial growth. Their own supporters have begun to complain; and the newspaper polls have already begun to register the swing of public opinion against them.

Ministerial Cross-Talk

In a revealing cross-talk comedy act, which would have hardly won a place in a third-rate vaudeville, the Tory Lord Chancellor and the Tory Leader in the House of Lords contradicted one another in a parallel display of their hopeless economic confusion and ignorance. On November 17 Lord Jellicoe, Leader in the House of Lords, declared:

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> Speculation that we are on the brink of some Weimar precipice is neurotic, unhealthy and nonsensical.

Immediately next day his fellow-Minister, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham, reaffirmed the Weimar comparison:

> I see the underlying seriousness not as a matter of crisis—and I felt my noble friend was relating the position to this when he used words like 'unhealthy' and 'neurotic'—but as a matter of mortal sickness. I do not think it is possible to overstate the seriousness of the situation which this country is facing . . . this was the disease from which the Weimar Republic died and gave place to Hitler . . . The disease is sometimes called inflation.

Both Ministers only revealed their economic and historical ignorance. The notorious galloping inflation in the Weimar Republic took place in 1923; and in that year Hitler's attempted coup failed. Hitler came to power only after the ferocious *deflation* offensive of Chancellor Brüning had led to six million unemployed; and even then Hitler was only placed in power from above, immediately after his vote had dropped by two million in the elections of November 1932, and the Communist vote had increased by 600,000. Amid all the talk now so freely spread to offer dark hints of 'a dictatorship of the Right or the Left' as the outcome of the present situation in Britain*, the real lessons of the inter-war years and the emergence of fascism are lost to view.

'Take it Out on the Workers'

In face of the menacing immediate economic situation, the accelerating inflation, and increase of unused productive capacity and unemployed man-power, Ministers have no coherent policy to offer save the old familiar formula to make the workers pay and bash the unions. All the official forecasts give the gloomiest picture of the economic prospects for 1971. A discordant chorus of voices arises from all the mentors of capitalism, official and unofficial, to clamour for more drastic policies, to impose a wage-freeze or 'incomes policy' or to force up unemployment as the supposed magic cure for inflation:

> Western nations have been told in an authoritative report that they will have to agree to more unemployment of their productive capacity and labour force if they want successfully to combat inflation. This explosive recommendation was contained in a report submitted today by Mr. Emile van Lennep, secretary-general of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation

* 'It was a senior Treasury official who on Friday night privately predicted that if the value of sterling continued to slide Britain's parliamentary democracy would ultimately be replaced by dictatorship either in the form of a left-wing Popular Democracy or a right-wing Banana Republic. The remark was made at a dinner party in the presence of foreign diplomats by a man whose room is very close to Anthony Barber's' (*Observer*, November 22, 1970).

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and Development to its economic policy committee (*Times*, November 17, 1970).

The *Daily Telegraph* on November 27, in a special feature article under the title 'How to Damp Down Inflation', demanded one million unemployed as the cure for inflation:

> Inflationary pressure will not stop until nominal unemployment is at least 4½ per cent of the work force, which means about one million people unemployed.

So the way to economic health, according to these pundits of the insane logic of capitalism, is to reduce the numbers productively employed in order to be able to reduce the purchasing power of those employed. 'Squeeze and Squeeze Hard' is the peremptory demand of the *Financial Times* on November 14:

> The Government has to choose, either carrying on as at present in Britain and hoping, or squeezing and squeezing hard. The view of the *Financial Times* is that the Government must now choose the latter no matter how unpleasant the economic and political consequences.

This is the logic of bedlam, characteristic of present-day capitalism. And this is the logic behind the Industrial Relations Bill to batter down the workers' trade union defences and resistance.

A Country without Inflation

Incidentally these quack doctors of supposed cures for the disease of inflation at present raging in all the countries of the capitalist world have failed to take account of the experience of one of their own pundits, the Foreign Editor of the *Sunday Times Business Supplement* who recently visited the German Democratic Republic for a fortnight ('I was allowed to wander freely') and recorded his findings in the issue of December 6. Having been there previously in 1957 he was aware of the heavy initial disabilities of the war-scarred background; how all the richest resources were concentrated in West Germany; how East Germany honourably fulfilled Potsdam and paid reparations to the Soviet Union valued at $2,300 million, while West Germany bilked its reparation obligations and received instead colossal dollar subsidies to build up its economy. (The artificial show-place of West Berlin is at present maintained by an annual subsidy of $732 million, as reported in *Time* of October 14, 1970, equivalent to £305 million or over £12 a week for every family of four.) Today this Business Editor found justified the claim that the German Democratic Republic is 'the world's tenth wealthiest industrial nation', and notes how, after the hardships of the initial building up from scratch, there has taken place 'in the last ten years

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something of a consumer revolution', instanced by the increase of television owners from 16.7 per hundred in 1960 to 66.3, and refrigerators from 6.1 to 48.3. However, what is important for our present purpose is what he found on the question of wages, inflation and employment. He found that 'in the last five years average wages have risen by some 12 per cent from £70 to £80 a month for the ordinary industrial worker' and that, while 'this may not sound much by Western standards', he notes:

> as inflation is an unknown quantity in Eastern Germany, state-imposed price control has ensured that the prices of most consumer goods have remained stable for at least ten years . . . Price stability has ensured that wage increases are real ones.

Has this successful keeping at bay of the demon of inflation been achieved by the loudly proclaimed capitalist nostrum of large-scale unemployment? On the contrary. 'Shortage of labour is the average East German manager's biggest headache.' So it is possible to combine full employment and rising real wages without inflation. But this is in a socialist economy. We have not reached that stage in Britain yet, though we shall reach it. The present urgent fight in Britain is to defeat the immediate capitalist offensive on working class rights and organisation, so as to be able to advance to the future working class solution.

From December 8 to January 12

It is a sign of the manifest bankruptcy of capitalist economic policy that they see no way forward save to attack the rights and standards of the working people, reduce consumption, promote unemployment and shackle the unions. In this situation the working class resistance to this offensive, so far from representing a 'narrow' 'sectional' defence of their special interests against 'economic wisdom', 'democracy' and 'the interests of the community', as the Government propagandists proclaim, represents in fact the one positive and healthy factor in the situation: to defend the rights and standards of the 95 per cent of the population who constitute the real 'community' of working people; to maintain the democratic rights won by generations of struggle, and thus promote the real cause of democracy; and to advance to alternative economic policies of expansion in the interests of the 95 per cent against the monopolies. The response to the first Action Day on December 8, with the unity in action of over half a million organised workers in the key areas of industry, together with wide sections of technical and professional workers, students, tenants, pensioners and housewives

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in the march and the lobby, has demonstrated the first stage of the mobilisation of the working people to defeat the most reactionary offensive of modern times in Britain. The extent of this response, recognised by the hostile press, which had originally prophesied a flop, as without previous parallel for a demonstration of this type since the days of 1926, revealed the overwhelming response that can be counted on once the entire strength of the organised working class movement is brought officially into action. Every historic achievement of the organised working class movement, acclaimed on all sides with pride today, has always begun with preliminary action and pressure from below, finally culminating in bringing the initially reluctant top leadership into action. November 14, December 8, January 12. These represent landmarks in the path for fulfilment of the urgent task to mobilise in time the full strength of the organised working class movement in effective action capable to compel the Tory Government to retreat from its offensive and withdraw the Industrial Relations Bill.

Words and Action

The entire trade union and labour movement is united in opposing the Tory Government offensive represented by the Industrial Relations Bill. But words are no substitute for action. The proclaimed unity in opposition covers at present dangerous divisions on tactics among the upper leadership. Three main trends may be distinguished. The right-wing parliamentary leadership seeks to confine the opposition to a parliamentary opposition and deplores industrial action. They revealed their attitude when they nominated Barbara Castle, author of the previous attempted anti-union legislation which the Labour Government was forced to withdraw, as their principal spokesman in face of the Tory Government's anti-union legislation. The TUC General Council has called for opposition to the bill by the entire trade union movement. But the right-wing majority on the General Council has pursued a dilatory line, advocating a mass collection of signatures and a newspaper advertising campaign; delaying any manifestation until January 12, after the Government has already begun pushing through the initial stages of its bill in December, and then only in the form of lunch-hour protests and an evening meeting; and delaying the Special TUC to the calling of which they are committed until March 1971. Such tactics court defeat. Third, the militant forces of trade unionism, which have their representatives, though in a minority, on the General Council, have pursued the aim of bringing into action

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the full strength of the organised working class movement to exercise, alongside the opposition in the parliamentary debates, every form of extra-parliamentary pressure, including industrial action of the organised workers and demonstrations of all sections of the people, as the indispensable means to defeat the Government offensive. The record of every previous successful stand for working class rights has proved the justice and indispensable necessity of these methods of mass pressure to defeat a reactionary offensive from above and maintain the hard-won rights of working class organisation.

Watch the Enemy

Revealing for the judgement of these tactical differences has been the attitude of the class enemy. The strategy of the Government spokesmen and press in relation to December 8 passed through a series of stages. The first stage was the familiar technique of silence in the hope that this would prevent widespread support. This technique had failed to take into account that militant trade unionists and the progressive movement have their own daily newspaper in the *Morning Star*. When the growing support had proved the failure of the technique of silence, the next device was the equally familiar old standby to denounce the whole affair as a 'Communist plot', and Government Ministers came out with solemn declarations to this effect, just as Labour Government Ministers had done before them. This strategy was as ineffective from Heath and Carr as it had been from Wilson and Gunter previously. It was obvious that the proceedings of the November 14 Conference of 1,800 elected delegates were public and open, and the opposite of 'a plot'. Similarly even a political illiterate would be aware that in any gathering of militant trade unionists and progressive people there will be communists and non-communists, and that the strength of the left in industry, on the factory floor and in the unions lies precisely in the co-operation of all militant trade unionists, communist and non-communist, for the common immediate aims of the working class struggle. After this ploy had failed, a new one was attempted, when the *Sunday Times* 'Industrial Notebook' came out with the discovery that it was an illusion to imagine the Communist Party was making the running; the Communists were only trying to jump on the bandwagon, or, as this writer put it, climb on 'the lumbering elephant' so as to appear to be conducting; the movement was really a movement of 'frustrated trade unionists', who had failed to realise that the Liaison Committee had no official standing and represented

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nobody but themselves. Once again facts ruined this ploy. So far from being unofficial, every single delegate to the November 14 Conference was officially elected from trade union organisations, including four trade union executives, 36 trade union district committees, 350 trade union branches, 55 trades councils and 155 shop stewards' committees.

Beware of Tory Praise

That old pioneer of socialism, August Bebel, used to say that he was not put out by denunciations from the spokesmen of the ruling class, but that if they praised him he would regard it as a sign that he had gone wrong. After all the other devices of the Government spokesmen had failed to smother the support for the December 8 demonstration, they finally concentrated all their fire to seize on the outcome of the TUC General Council meeting on November 25, which had discussed the plan of campaign against the Industrial Relations Bill, and at the end of which the General Secretary had explained to the press that the December 8 demonstration was 'not in accordance with the decisions or the wishes of the General Council.' Immediately on the following day, on November 26, Premier Heath rose in parliament to declare:

> I would willingly endorse what the TUC has said in condemnation of unofficial strikes on December 8 against the industrial relations legislation. No person in this House could tolerate an attempt to dictate what we shall do by industrial action against the express wishes of the electorate (Conservative cheers).

The Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party associated himself with this sentiment, while explaining the opposition of the General Council and the Labour Party to the bill. Thereafter Tory MPs and press spokesmen lavished their praises on the General Council majority for this disavowal of action, which interested them far more than the planned campaign of opposition to the bill. To any worker with class sense this praise from a Tory Government conducting an offensive against the working class is a sufficient warning light.

Constitutionalism and Democracy

Of course this Tory Government and their buglemen in the press seek to invoke the sacred doctrines of 'constitutionalism' and 'democracy' and the 'electoral mandate' representing 'the will of the majority' in order to conduct their offensive against the real working class majority of the population and their rights of organisa-

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tion. In the old days up to the middle of the nineteenth century 'democracy' was a term of execration and abhorrence in the eyes of all true Tories, and the glory of the British limited monarchy, cabinet system and parliamentary constitution with its balanced structure was praised as avoiding the evils of 'democracy'. Queen Victoria could declare to a radical minister as late as 1880 that 'she *cannot* and will not be the Queen of a *democratic monarchy*' (related in Elizabeth Longford's *Victoria R.I.*). In the early twentieth century the Tories were in the forefront of organising revolt to flout the 'electoral mandate' and 'parliamentary constitutionalism' in order to prevent legislation of which they disapproved. Lord Birkenhead declared in his speech at Ballyclore, Antrim, on September 10, 1913:

> From that moment [the passing of the Home Rule Bill] we on our part will say to our followers in England: 'To your tents, O Israel'. From that moment we shall stand side by side with you, refusing to recognise any law and prepared with you to risk the collapse of the whole body politic to prevent this monstrous crime.

It is no contradiction that today the Tories brandish the slogan of 'democracy' and the 'electoral mandate' when it is a question of fighting the working class. Equally when they repudiated democracy and parliamentary constitutionalism yesterday or brandish its banner today, they have meant and continue to mean the same thing —the domination of their class, the domination of capital. It was Beatrice Webb who recorded in her Diary in 1931 that the events of 1931 had revealed that the real Government of this country is 'the dictatorship of the capitalist'.

'Mandate' of One Third of the Electorate

'Electoral Mandate'? The electorate gave these Tory Ministers a mandate, in accordance with their own electoral pledges, to carry out policies which 'would at a stroke reduce the rise in prices, increase production and reduce unemployment'. Instead, these Ministers have carried out a host of measures to increase prices; under their rule prices have risen faster than ever; production has continued to slump; and unemployment has reached record heights, unequalled month by month since 1940. 'The expressed will of the majority of the electorate'? The electorate in the general election of June 1970 totalled 39,384,364 registered voters. Of these the Conservative Party won 13,144,682 votes. That is exactly one third of the electorate. Two thirds of the electorate refused to support the Tories. This one third minority basis of the Tory Government

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is even an overstatement of the proportion of their support; since one quarter of those between 18 and 21 years of age, entitled to vote by the new extension of the franchise, did not for a variety of reasons get inscribed on the register of electors used in the general election of June 1970. So the Tories in the general election won *less than one third* of the votes of those entitled to vote.

Whose Majority?

'The will of the majority'? What about the will of the majority now when the electors, including those who were deceived by the Tory election pledges, have had experience of the harsh blows of the Barber-Carr programme inflicted upon them, and the swing of opinion has begun to move against the Government? The Assistant General Secretary of the TUC General Council, Lionel Murray, declared on December 1 as an argument against industrial action: 'The Tory Government has only to get a sniff of a strike—and they will go to the country again. And what is more, they will win.' Characteristic defeatism. If the action of the people should compel the Tory Government to resign and hold an immediate general election, before carrying through the anti-union legislation, this would already represent an initial victory enabling the battle to be carried forward for the people to inflict defeat on this anti-popular Government and its offensive. Already within five months of the formation of the Heath Government the newspaper polls have begun to reflect the tide of popular opinion turning against it since the news of the Barber cuts offensive and the projected anti-union legislation. The Gallup poll, taken on November 2 to 15, and published in the *Daily Telegraph* on November 19, showed a swing from the previous Tory majority to a Labour majority of 4½ per cent. By the beginning of December the Opinion Research Centre poll—the only poll which correctly predicted the general election outcome on the eve of the election—published in the *Evening Standard* on December 3, showed a Labour lead of 5½ per cent. Not the Tory Ministers, the executioners of the will of the handful of bankers and industrial tycoons, but the nine million trade unionists constitute with their families the real majority of the population, and in this fight for rights and living standards, represent the real interests of the majority of the people.

Golden Jubilee of the Council of Action

Let the fainthearts and capitulators in the upper leadership of the labour movement recall the battles which were fought, and

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successfully fought, by their fathers to compel a reactionary Tory-dominated Government to retreat from its offensive plans and bow to the will of the working class. They did not let themselves be held back by panic fears of 'unconstitutional' action or the impermissibility of extra-parliamentary mass pressure and the use of the industrial power of the working class. Just over half a century ago, on August 9, 1920, the Council of Action was set up to compel the Tory-dominated Government of Lloyd George to abandon its war plans and active steps for military intervention in Poland against the Russian Soviet Republic. Then also the action began from below, when the dockers stopped the Government munitions ship *Jolly George*, bound for Poland, on May 10. Then also the role of the communists in the midst of the working class fight was shown in the inspiring leadership of Harry Pollitt and the group of comrades working with him, who had put in two years of tireless unremitting work and agitation, undeterred by victimisation and preliminary failures to win response in action from the workers, until the spark was finally lit over the *Jolly George* incident which drew the entire organised working class movement and the whole top leadership into action. The resolution of the Emergency Conference on August 9 which set up the Council of Action declared that the Conference 'warns the Government that the whole industrial power of the organised workers will be used to defeat this war.' Was this a resolution of 'wildcats'? It was the unanimous official resolution of the joint meeting of the TUC Parliamentary Committee, the Labour Party Executive and the Parliamentary Labour Party. On August 13 the Special Labour Conference summoned by the Council of Action, authorised the Council 'to call for every form of withdrawal of labour which circumstances may require' to compel the Government to accept the three-point policy set out. The Labour Party Chairman, answering the argument that the decision 'means a challenge to the whole Constitution of the country', declared that 'Constitutionalism can only exist as long as it does not outrage the conscience of the community.' That was the militant spirit of working class strength and action which won the victory then. That spirit is more than ever needed in the higher stage of the struggle today to defeat the offensive which seeks to strike at the basic rights of working class organisation. Let this Golden Jubilee of the Council of Action serve as a reminder to point the way forward for the mobilisation of the active strength of the entire organised working class movement in the testing time that has now opened.

R.P.D.

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ACT NOW TO SAVE THE UNIONS

(1)

Kevin Halpin
Chairman
Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions

I AM sure the national strike action, with the demonstrations, marches and lobbies called and attended by trade unionists throughout the country on December 8, was one of the biggest and most representative seen in Britain for many years. More than 600,000 workers and numbers of students and old age pensioners took part in these actions, and many scores of thousands marched in our towns and cities.

Everybody recognises that December 8 was only the forerunner of many further actions in a nationwide campaign to kill this vicious, politically motivated, class bill, inspired by big business interests for the greater profit of big business.

The defeat of the Tory Government's offensive and its bill will transform the trade union movement and open the road to a better and more fruitful life for the people of this country.

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(2)

Ken Brett*

THE one day stoppage on December 8, being the success it was, surely indicates the feeling abroad amongst the workers against this Government's anti-trade union legislation. It demonstrates the urgent need for the official trade union leadership to come out and really mobilise the movement to prevent this bill becoming law. If what was achieved on December 8 is only a sample, let us just visualise what it would be like if the TUC General Council became the real centre of operations and mobilised in order to stop this bill going through. During the campaign leading up to the day, the question on everybody's lips was 'When is the General Council going to come out and really fight?'—thus recognising the need to add teeth to its present policy of education and propaganda.

The nation's news media, in the main, demonstrated where their real interests stood. The attempt to play down the effect of December 8, in fact, substantiated its success. Further evidence against the

* Ken Brett, who is Assistant General Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (Engineers' Section), writes here in his personal capacity.

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news media is the treatment rendered to the power workers in their struggle for a justifiable wage increase and not the meagre amount that had been offered—an amount stipulated by the Government in the background.

In its attempt to justify this pernicious piece of legislation, the Government claims to have been mandated. How pitiful an excuse! No British Government gets mandated. The only mandate this Government has got is from big business, whose finances largely assisted the Tory election campaign. The claim that strike action against this bill endangered the British constitution is nonsense, as we do not have one. What we have got is an institution and the 'bluebloods' that form its make-up; likewise, the claim of majority is false, as the majority of the electorate did not vote for this Government.

To obtain trust is a desirable objective, but to gain it takes time and is only given based on experience. Who can trust a Government which declares at the outset a restriction on wages for the public sector, in order to condition the private sector; stands at one side in the strike of the dustmen, to the detriment of the nation's health and then pours cold water on the final outcome. In the case of the power workers, one day they shout 'blackmail' and then, in the next breath, claim there is no Government interference in the negotiations.

This Government, like previous Tory Governments, speaks with a forked tongue and their word is not their bond. This is another sound reason why this bill has got to be stopped. In this respect, more positive action is needed from the General Council now and not at some time in the future.

The material at present issued by the TUC is splendid for explanatory and condemnation purposes, but the situation for the movement is too serious to be just engaged in 'paper war' or the niceties of debate. The ridiculous length to which this has been taken can be seen, when the General Secretary of the AUEW (Engineering Section) extends the Union's *Journal* to give our class enemy, Robert Carr, a platform to sell his devious wares. This *Journal* is paid for out of the pockets of the very people that Carr is attacking, i.e. trade union members.

The fight against this bill needs to be seen and not just heard. It needs to be done now and not at some future date, for then the bill, in all probability, would be law and its resultant effects could possibly create a weakened movement and, worse still, a movement seriously disillusioned by lack of real leadership beforehand.

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If we are not to see the start of a corporate state whereby the unions become a glorified civil service and officers acting as the whipping boys for government, with a possibility of martyrs being made by the dozen, then this bill must be stopped. Reasoned argument does not prevail, so organised strength must be used, as always when the need arises, which is now.

The working class movement is full of fine traditions and many people within the movement have accepted the tradition that matters of a political nature are to be decided, in the ultimate, by the Parliamentary Labour Party. Surely, in our present situation, this can be our destruction for, when the parliamentary shouting is done, the vote will be a Tory majority for the bill. This accepted tradition carries with it a security of office for five years for the successful party, who, in turn, can then treat the electorate in isolation as and when possible.

Surely, what Carr has now set in motion should remove any doubts as to the wisdom of that tradition, for at stake is the very survival and growth of the British trade union movement and, possibly, that of the British Labour Party, whose main source of income and activity is derived from the unions. This struggle calls for maximum unity of the labour movement. Divisions need to be removed and forces strengthened. There will be differences of opinion. Quite rightly so, but do not let us lose sight of our main objective, which is to stop this bill becoming law.

The TUC General Council have the opportunity to become the fulcrum in this campaign and create the unity required, in order to show this Government our organised strength and opposition to the bill. To this end they should not hesitate to act, as the whole future of our movement is at stake.

The call for lunch-time meetings on January 12 needs to be extended to a mobilisation of activity. This activity to be even greater than that of December 8. The Foundry Workers' Section of the AUEW have already called upon the General Council of the TUC to make it a one-day stoppage, and what an uplift in the campaign it will be if the Council responds to this call. Added to this, the Council should reconsider its decision to recall Congress in March and bring it forward to the earliest possible date in 1971.

The General Council must realise that now is the time when it is necessary to mobilise the British trade union movement into action, an action the like of which has not yet been witnessed, in order to demonstrate both to this Government and big business that this pernicious piece of class legislation is not wanted.

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THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
of the

CONSTRUCTIONAL ENGINEERING UNION

Warm fraternal Greetings to workers the world over for the year 1971

For working class Unity and Solidarity

For withdrawal of U.S. troops and Peace in Vietnam

For Peace and Prosperity

H. BARR, President
E. MARSDEN, General Secretary

Wishing all trade unionists a Peaceful and Prosperous New Year—

free from oppressive legislation (And that is up to us)

DRAUGHTSMEN'S AND ALLIED TECHNICIANS' ASSOCIATION

Onslow Hall, Little Green
Richmond, Surrey

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF OPERATIVE PRINTERS & ASSISTANTS

13-16 BOROUGH ROAD, SE1

The Executive Council of
The National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants
extends to All Members and Friends of NATSOPA
their Sincere Wishes and Good Luck for a
Happy and a Successful New Year

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YOUNG WORKERS' CONFERENCE

Dave Dixon

Secretary,
London Trade Union Youth Conference Committee

FOLLOWING the successful day of action on December 8, all the signs of a major class confrontation around the Tories' anti-trade union bill can be seen with the build-up now to the next day of action on January 12. No doubt the weeks ahead will see the great armies of labour organised through their unions move into a more open battle position. The 1970 Trades Union Congress is being recalled to decide what action it will take and the executive committee of the Labour Party has urged the Parliamentary Labour Party to fight the bill all the way.

The Tories are trying to isolate the trade unions which they say are 'holding the country to ransom'. In reality as can be seen with the recent 'mini'-budget the Tories are reducing still further the hard-won living standards of the working people including stealing the milk from the kids at school. Before they can get away with it they must disarm the workers of the only weapon they have—organisation, particularly in the trade union movement with near 10 million members!

As we can see this is a wider class battle that is of concern to all the working people against the interests of big monopolies and their Tory spokesmen. Young people as a large section of the population together with women, pensioners, the unemployed, unorganised, small businessmen and students have to be won into action alongside the trade unionists to defeat the bill as a first step to bringing down the Tory Government.

Following on the 350-strong youth lobby of the 1970 TUC, designed to draw attention on the part of the trade union movement to the position amongst young people, where over three million are unorganised—meaning they are subject often to low wages and dead end jobs, beside the fact that some 10,000 school leavers are still unemployed—there is planned a Young Workers' Conference in Manchester on Sunday, February 7.

It is planned to get a large number of delegates elected from shop stewards', district and regional committees, as well as union branches, trades councils and young workers' committees where they exist.

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As such this would most likely be the biggest and most representative gathering of young workers to have taken place for many years. The feeling both for the lobby and the conference indicates a new mood amongst young workers that they are no longer going to be the poor relation in the family, and to change that they are ready to fight!

When the trade unions are now lining up to defend and extend their rights and interests, they will be strengthened if they are able to respond to the needs of young workers. Advances for them can be achieved only if they are organised into their respective unions and taking action with the adult movement to defend and advance their common interests, each assisting the other. For this reason every assistance and encouragement should be given to ensure the Manchester conference is successful. Above all what is required are young delegates elected particularly from the factories and other places of work.

A letter is being circulated to all trade union organisations calling for support and indicating the aims of the lobby and conference, that is to get the TUC to convene a Youth Conference which could:

(1) Examine the particular issues of concern to young people especially those at work;

(2) Examine ways of attracting and involving more young people in the trade union movement, particularly the three million currently unorganised at work.

The letter goes on to state:

The response which the committee had to its appeal for support showed the concern with which the problem of youth within the trade unions is viewed, so much so that 350 delegates were elected, representing over a million trade unionists, to lobby the TUC.

Our committee met Bros. Vic Feather, Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon who all expressed their personal support for the aim of the lobby and the Committee. They expressed the need for resolutions to be sent to the union executives and the TUC itself, calling for a Youth Conference. In addition to these, some 250 of the 1970 TUC delegates signed their support for the aims of the lobby.

Also at Brighton a youth meeting was held in the afternoon, attended by over 250 of the lobbyists. A call was made to hold a conference in Manchester on Sunday, February 7, 1971, consisting of young trade union delegates. It was also forcefully expressed by all concerned that this conference should in no way be seen as an alternative to a TUC convened conference, but a further way of showing the TUC that *youth are concerned with their future* and that of the great trade union movement in our country.

It was also agreed to send invitations to every union executive committee, Brother Vic Feather and the General Council, asking them to attend as

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speakers or observers and that all issues discussed would be sent to the TUC for their information and use.

There is no doubt the conference will be a demonstration representative of a growing feeling amongst young workers of their position and a keenness for the trade unions to do something about it. Also it will provide a platform where young people will express their full support and determination to act alongside the adult movement to defeat the Tory bill.

On the Saturday evening it is planned to hold a dance for the delegates and friends at the New Century Hall, Manchester, where the conference will be the following day. This itself will be a practical example of the kind of activity the whole trade union movement should be organising to help attract and win the active support of young people.

Over sixteen local conference committees have been established to co-ordinate the work in the major towns and cities throughout Britain. The full support of the whole labour movement is needed for this conference*, particularly in Manchester where hospitality will be organised for delegates on the Saturday evening.

* Further information from Peter Kavanagh, 22 Edward House, Newburn Street, London, S.E.11.

National Union of Sheet Metal Workers, Coppersmiths and Heating and Domestic Engineers

Best Wishes to our members, their families and all our trade union colleagues for 1971

L. W. Buck - - - General Secretary

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CUBAN EXILES— THE TRUTH

Luis Ortega

Luis Ortega was a well-known newspaperman in pre-revolutionary Cuba writing under the name of 'Sol' for the daily Prensa Libre. *After the victory of the revolution, he left his country and went to the United States with his wife and children. Now he writes for a counter-revolutionary publication published in Spanish in the United States*—El Tiempo—*whose staff is made up of well-known enemies of the revolution. The article which follows below—which was reproduced in* Granma, *September 29, 1970—first appeared in the June 21 issue of* El Tiempo.—*Ed.* LM).

'FIDEL CASTRO confiscated my property and made me a man without a country, but the United States has confiscated my sons,' one of those unhappy exiles who fled Cuba ten years ago in search of guarantees told me a few days ago, adding 'I've spent ten years talking to them about Martí, Céspedes, Agramonte and Maceo, but they couldn't care less. Yesterday I showed them an album with pictures of the island to get a reaction from them, and all three said Cuba was a lot of junk and they weren't the least bit interested in going back there. They're ashamed of me because my English is very bad, and they don't want their American friends to meet me . . .'

These few words sum up a tragedy in which all Cuban exiles participate, to a greater or lesser extent.

At first they all felt that exile was a matter of physical transfer—living here or there; working here or there; climate, language, heat or cold. But now, in the twelfth year of Castroism, the tragedy—the deep, real, intimate and irrevocable tragedy—has matured, grown up, sprouted hair and a beard and is running around smoking marijuana. Those who took their children away from Cuba because they feared the Government was going to take them away from them now have neither children nor country. Those who feared the draft under Castro now see their children marched off to Vietnam, treated like animals by American sergeants who view them as fifth-rate human beings. Those who feared their children would be corrupted in Castro's Cuba now see them on the streets of Miami, New York and Chicago participating in a process of social decay to which they are alien. Their environment is swallowing them up.

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The children who were 3, 5 or 10 years old when they arrived here are now 15, 17 or 20. They aren't Cubans. They are not a part of the spiritual tradition of the island. They are not a part of the Cuban national venture. They have broken all moral, economic, cultural, spiritual and linguistic ties with their parents. They are not Americans, either. They have gone to schools where the other children call them 'dirty Cubans' and the teachers view them with contempt. They speak English well, but they have a last name which is a curse: González, Martínez or Pérez. In this country full of revolting racial tensions, this is a crime. When the draft comes around, González will be called up before Smith.

They are people without roots and a tradition to hold on to, without parents who can serve as a model for anything, because the emigrant parent is a poor soul who has been uprooted from the economic and cultural point of view. Those who take shelter in the ghetto take on a ghetto spirit and live in an underworld. They live under the city. Those who venture outside, those who try and join the turbulent American world, must bear their names like a cross. It is the tragedy faced by all children of emigrants. They are not there and will never be here. From the intellectual point of view, they are deficient, because intelligence requires roots in the land to absorb the juices. The United States is a sad country, full of sad people. Tensions are tearing the country apart, and now in the times of crisis in which we are living the tensions are even sharper.

In the twelfth year of exile the Cuban has no children and no country. It has all been in vain. He sees them struggling to join a hostile, difficult and complex society. It hasn't been so easy. It wasn't just a change of address but rather a tremendous process of spiritual adaptation.

They came to the United States in search of guarantees. But in 1970, the United States is the only country in the world where there are no guarantees. Eighty per cent of the young people of the United States have lost confidence in the country. Corruption is rampant at all levels. Drugs are an escape and a way of protesting against a social system that is in crisis.

I have heard Cubans murmur in their squalid tenements—fearful of being overheard by the professionals of anti-Castroism, those who administer patriotism and live off it—'I think if I'd stayed over there everything would have come out better. The kids wouldn't have gone to the dogs and wouldn't hate me. At least, I would know they were in the cane-fields cutting cane.'

This is a terrible confession of sterility—and a completely useless

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one, at that. The tragic thing—on the twelfth year—about those who have left their country is that they have come to a dead end. They do not know what to do. There is no going back. They find themselves on a one-way street. They have been caught between what is bad and what is worse. Exile—they have now discovered—is something more than simply moving to another country. It is defeat itself. It is like being left absolutely naked. One's country is something more than a place where one feeds his face. It is the spirit's dwelling place, and when the spirit is left without a dwelling place it enters on a slow wasting-away process. That is the fatal thing about it.

Morning STAR fights the Tories
Read it everyday

NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS (SCOTTISH AREA)
5 Hillside Crescent
Edinburgh. EH7 5DZ

The Scottish miners send New Year greetings to all people struggling for peace and socialism.

Michael McGahey, President
David Bolton, Vice-President
William McLean, General Secretary

LONDON REGION
NATIONAL GRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION

Fraternal Greetings from London's Craft Printers

W. T. Booroff, Secretary
3-7 New Street Square, E.C.4.

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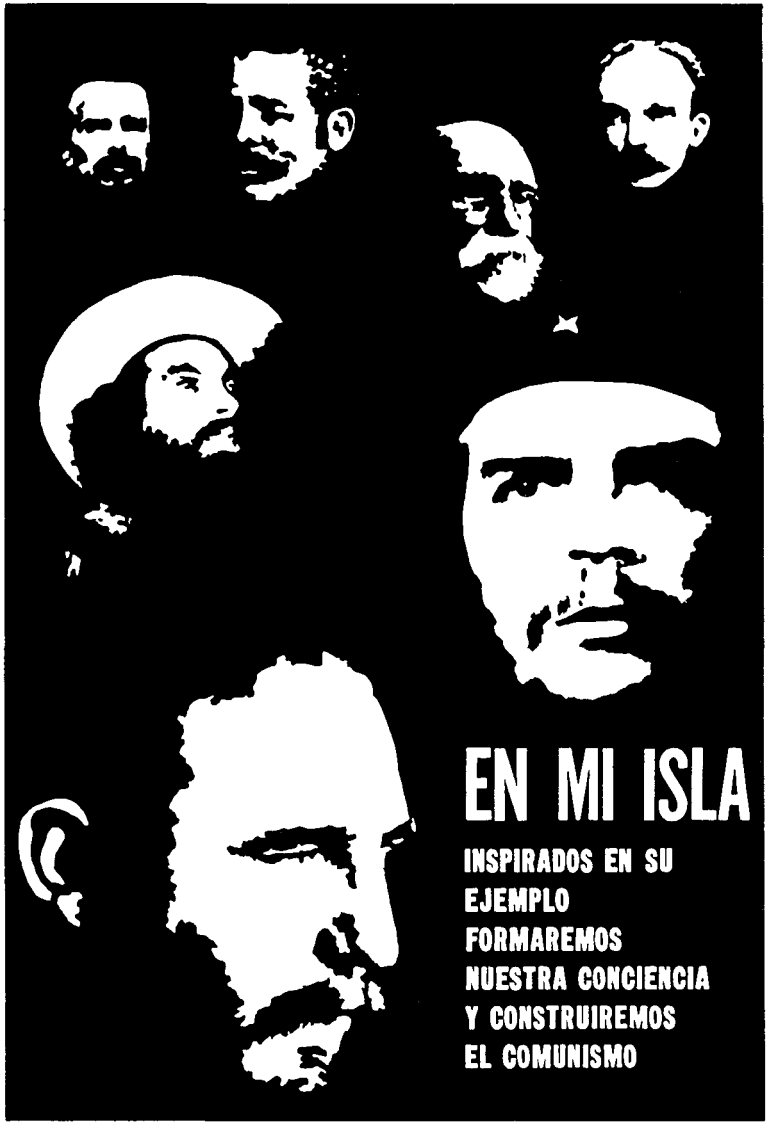
'THE ART OF

We mark the twelfth anniversary of the Cuban revolution, whic
***The Art of Revolution: 96 Posters from Cuba*, edited by Dugald Ster**



On my island, inspired by your example, we shall shape our conscience and build communism.

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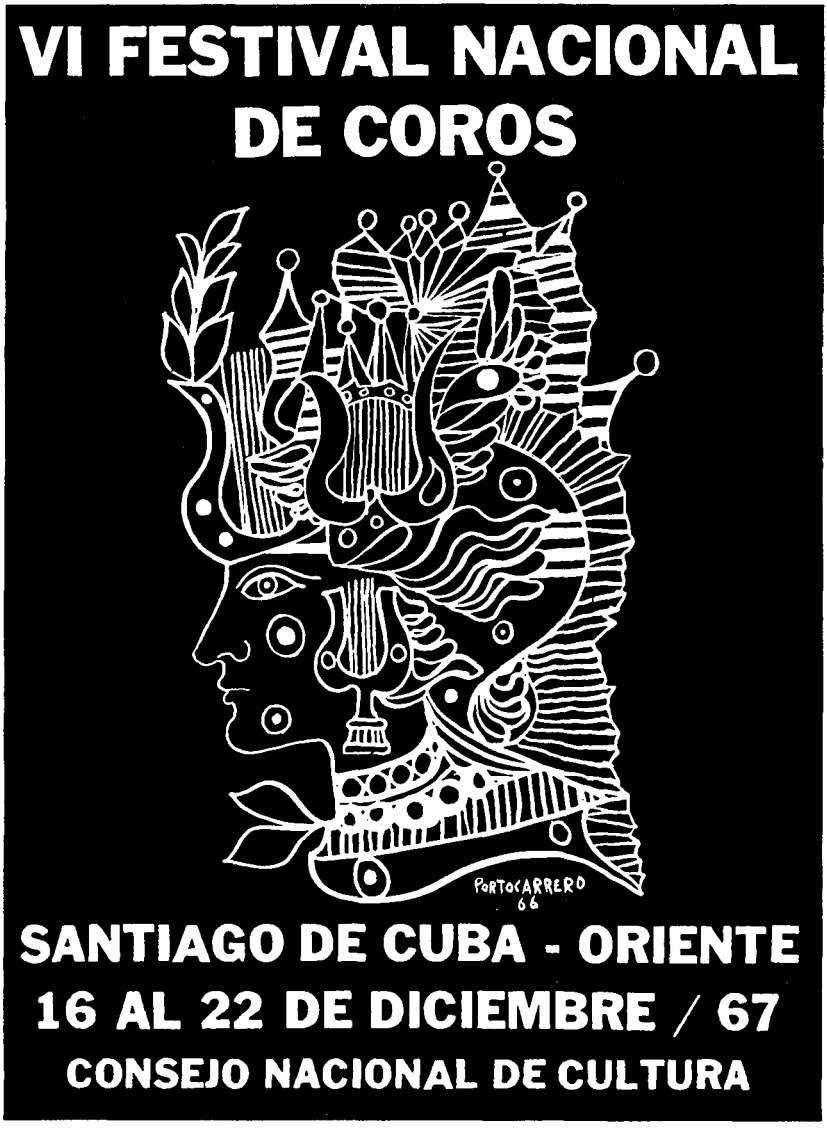
EVOLUTION'

: her from the dictator Batista, with these reproductions from
d with an introductory essay by Susan Sontag. *Pall Mall*, 142 pp., 42s.



VI National Choral Festival

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POLISH-WEST GERMAN TREATY

Quaestor

ON December 7 the Polish Premier and West German Chancellor signed a treaty in which the Federal German Republic for the first time recognised that the Polish state frontier along the Oder and Neisse (Odra and Nysa) rivers, laid down by the four-power agreement of Potsdam (August 2, 1945), is inviolable. Both sides declared that they had no territorial claims, that all disputes between them would be settled by peaceful methods only, and that all existing European borders were also inviolable.

In itself this treaty involves recognition of important facts.

First. The areas thus regained for Poland—about 39,000 square miles inhabited by 10 million Poles and constituting over 30 per cent of Poland's territory—were German for only 200 years. They were taken in the successive partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, 1795) by Austria, Prussia and Tsarist Russia. Soviet Russia gave back all the Polish-inhabited territories annexed by the Tsars.

Second. Austria and Prussia had carried on systematic Germanisation of the Polish population there, by prohibiting official use of Polish, enforcing teaching in German in schools, etc.: a process not unknown to Welshmen. German colonists were settled on a large scale—and they displayed their colonialist mentality in 1933, when they voted 60 per cent for Hitler while the industrialised areas of western Germany gave him 30-35 per cent. These were the people (seven and a half millions) who fled or were deported in 1944 and 1945 to West Germany.

Third. At Potsdam the four Allies admitted Poland's claim because of the frightful destruction caused by Hitler's invasion: above all, the six million Poles killed, over one-sixth of the population, while 'the rest were systematically degraded to the status of slave labourers' (*Times* editorial, November 23, 1970). The British Government, in particular, had recognised the claim in an official letter to the emigré London Government (November 2, 1944) and in a declaration by Churchill in parliament (December 15, 1944). It was endorsed by the Four Powers at their Crimea meeting (February 11, 1945) before they embodied it in their Potsdam agreement.

Fourth. For years the enemies of peace in Europe alleged that that agreement only spoke of Polish *administration* of these 'former German' territories pending their future 'delimitation' under a

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peace treaty—implying that they were not finally recognised as Polish. This was a swindling play upon words. In all international documents, 'delimitation' means merely the work of a team of officials and surveyors from both sides, tracing yard by yard the precise course of an already agreed boundary, and then supervising the erection of frontier posts. The long process of 'acting dumb' on this question has now officially ended.

But not so far as the enemies of peace are concerned. For there is an even more important aspect of the treaty. It represents a second step along the road opened by the West German treaty with the Soviet Union on August 12—the road leading to peaceful coexistence of capitalist and socialist states in Europe. It brings nearer the day when West Germany—last citadel of German finance-capital, surviving from Kaiser Wilhelm's and Adolf Hitler's empires—accepts the consequences of the two defeats which those empires sustained: thereby eliminating one of the biggest dangers to world peace.

And that is just what the enemies of peace *don't* accept. It is they who broke up the wartime alliance, on which the United Nations organisation was founded, by splitting up Germany in order to rebuild capitalism in its western part. It is they who, by setting up Nato, forced the socialist countries to reply by creating the Warsaw Pact. And it is they whose friends in West Germany have broken out in curses and defiance to condemn the treaty with Poland.

Before negotiations began (October 26), the 'Christian Democrat Union'—the leading opposition party, for years the blue-eyed boys of the US State Department and the Foreign Office—made clear they kept their hands free to denounce and sabotage the treaty, by refusing Brandt's invitation to send observers to its signature. When the treaty was published, their spokesman Barzel denounced it (November 20): the Federation of Expellees—i.e. the leaders of the colonialists deported from Poland—proclaimed it 'unjust' and 'unconstitutional', and it was made a first class issue in the Bavarian state elections (November 22). Their efforts there were defeated: Brandt's policy won a majority; but on November 23 the CDU officially proclaimed the treaty to be a departure from 'the basic principles of German policy'—one way of saying that reconquest of the lost territories, i.e. war, is one of *their* 'basic principles'.

Their friends abroad—too fly to support them openly—nevertheless at once showed where they stood by allowing (another way

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of saying 'encouraging') the CDU to hold a provocative meeting of MPs in West Berlin at that very moment—and protested against 'provocation' when the GDR authorities held up traffic to examine what was in the 'delegates'' cars. Very convenient! Then they began piling up demand after demand before a settlement of the West Berlin question could be reached: a settlement which was West Germany's condition for ratifying the two treaties. And, on December 4, 35 Tory MPs became the guests of the CDU—to be 'treated to an impassioned and vitriolic attack' on Brandt's policies (*Times*, December 5, 1970). The public, of course, is expected to believe that the Tory MPs didn't know that thereby they would be providing a sounding-board for that 'vitriolic attack'!

It is perfectly clear that the fight for peace in Europe has not yet been won, by any means. British labour has a rarely equalled opportunity at this time to throw its influence into the scale, by demanding ratification of the treaties at the earliest possible moment.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNIONISM

T. F. McWhinnie

THE resignation of the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has, perhaps quite naturally, received more publicity than the many more positive, but less superficially sensational, developments in the international trade union field, which are nevertheless directly related to the American action.

For although the American withdrawal was sparked off by anger because the ICFTU had not immediately rejected the application for affiliation of the United Automobile Workers of America (which had left the AFL-CIO), it quickly became clear that this was only a pretext. The real reason for the crisis in relationships between the Americans and the ICFTU was the development of extensive contacts between ICFTU national centres and unions on the one hand and those affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions on the other. This emerged with no dubiety during the unsuccessful negotiations which took place to persuade the Americans to change their mind.

The most significant of these exchanges have been those between

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the West German DGB and the Soviet trade unions. This marks a new development in Europe. For while, even at the very depths of the cold war, relations between the British unions and their counterparts in the socialist countries never completely ceased, this was much less true in other capitalist countries of Europe, and above all in West Germany, where contacts were severed for many long years.

The pursuit of a *détente* with the East by Willy Brandt has given the German unions the opportunity of playing their part, and so far a top level delegation of the DGB has been to the USSR and a return visit has been paid to West Germany by the Soviet trade unions. Proposals have been made for exchanges of delegations on a regional and provincial level between the two countries, and safety at work, workers' participation in management, social security and adult vocational training have been suggested as themes for study and exchanges of experience.

While some differences still exist, notably connected with the status of West Berlin and recognition of the DGB membership there, contacts have now been extended to other socialist countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia and Poland, and initial discussions have also been held with the FDGB of the German Democratic Republic. 'The Ice Age is Ending', proclaimed *Welt der Arbeit*, journal of the DGB in an article reporting the DGB delegation's visit to the Soviet Union, which they found 'significantly positive'.

Contacts are also taking place between the Christian unions and the socialist world, the most notable of which was the recent visit to Moscow of the Belgian Christian trade union centre, whose General Secretary, Jean Bruck, is also General Secretary of the former International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, now named the World Confederation of Labour.

In Asia, too, contacts between the Soviet AUCCTU and the Japanese trade unions have been solidly based on the formation of a Japanese-Soviet Trade Union Committee, the Japanese side being composed of both the General Council of Japanese Trade Unions (Soyho) and the Liaison Council of Independent Trade Unions (Churitsu Roren), neither of which organisations are affiliated to any international centre. The meetings of this Committee, which was set up in 1966, have given rise to an interesting and original form of strengthening international trade union relations through the organisation of widely-based conferences which meet alternately in the Soviet Union and Japan. At these meetings, each country

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sends anything up to two hundred representatives who hear reports from both countries and then form commissions to discuss the problems raised, such as the struggle against American imperialism in Vietnam, the dismantling of American bases in Japan, exchanges of delegations based on unions, towns and districts, of films, amateur artistic groups and photographs. This form of work goes some way to creating a firm base for continuing co-operation which is not solely built on top-level contacts between a few trade union officials, as is only too often the case.

These are only a few of the many, and increasing developments in the field of relationships between the unions in the socialist world and those in capitalist countries which do not belong to the same international trade union organisation.

In recent years the Italian and French unions have both strengthened national trade union unity and have widened contacts with ICFTU-affiliated centres and unions and with national sections of the World Confederation of Labour. Relationships now exist between the French CGT, for example, the Belgian FGTB and with both the Social Democrat and Christian unions of Italy, while exchanges of students have been taking place for the last two years between a number of British and CGT unions.

The joint committee of Anglo-French technicians' unions engaged in the Concorde project, and the more recent formation of the British-Italian Dunlop-Pirelli committee to exchange information on hours, piece-work rates and staff salaries, are only two of the numerous developments of this type which show the trend of present-day international trade union affairs in Western Europe, a surprisingly large number of which were brought to light at the Conference on International Companies organised by the TUC in October.

The admission of the French CGT and the Italian CGIL to the Economic and Social Committee of the Common Market after years of exclusion has cleared away many prejudices and barriers with ICFTU affiliates. Last May, for instance, a colloquium of 120 trade union representatives from France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg and the Federal German Republic was held at Pont-à-Lesse (Belgium) where, after a two-day discussion, the proposal was put forward to set up some kind of European trade union centre which would provide a meeting place for unions of all affiliations at which information could be exchanged, documents and studies on social and economic questions could be prepared and circulated, and meetings and confrontations of ideas arranged.

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The idea is still in its early stages but none of those taking part in the meeting opposed the suggestion.

The patient and intense work for unity of the World Federation of Trade Unions is also beginning to bear fruit. Joint committees already exist with the All-African Trade Union Federation, the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions and with the Standing Congress for Latin American Trade Union Unity, to which body belong not only affiliated WFTU unions in that continent but a number of important autonomous centres such as those in Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, Colombia, Salvador and Nicaragua. Good relationships also exist with many affiliates of the Latin American Confederation of Christian Unions.

A recent top-level meeting with the World Confederation of Labour has resulted in the WFTU putting forward a group of practical proposals for co-operation between the two bodies and these suggestions are to be the subject of consideration by the executive bodies of the WCL. The World Council of the WCL has now taken the decision to examine whether it is possible and opportune to have contacts with the WFTU in order to exchange information and viewpoints. At the International Labour Office, too, the consistent efforts of WFTU representatives resulted at the last ILO conference in a joint resolution being put forward on the subject of Spain and Greece. The seventh Congress of the WFTU in October 1969 was an outstanding illustration of the extent and sweep of the movement for unity now going on. *There 46 national centres not affiliated to the WFTU took part as observers*, while 14 new national centres affiliated to the WFTU between the sixth and seventh Congresses. A typical example of the kind of positive atmosphere now developing between the WFTU and many countries with ICFTU affiliates is provided by the case of Australia where eighteen national unions got together and sponsored a tour by a member of the WFTU Secretariat, organising receptions and meetings with Australian trade unionists throughout the country.

The mass of interesting and favourable changes over the recent period should not, however, blind us to the obstacles which still strew the path. It is true that the trend is a reflection of a militant revival which is going on deep down in the working class in most countries of the world, a growth in maturity, a sharpening of the class struggle, changes in the balance of forces and an inability on the part of many deeply committed reformist organisations to continue to pursue their old policies. But there can and will still be hesitations, reversions to old ideas, returns to the past and

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expressions of long-standing distrusts and suspicions before the barriers finally come down.

In explaining why the WFTU wants unity, Pierre Gensous, General Secretary of the World Federation, said at the recent meeting of the General Council that it was for 'a very simple but basic reason—the community of interests of the exploited is fundamentally incompatible with the interests of their exploiters . . . whether they are in the WFTU, the WCL, the ICFTU or whether they are unorganised.'

It is in this spirit that the World Federation of Trade Unions has proposed in a message to all national and international trade union organisations that a meeting be held in which would take part the WFTU, the WCL, the ICFTU, independent regional organisations and non-affiliated national centres and which would take the form of a round table discussion 'without proscriptions, without conditions, without preliminaries, in which each would put his own point of view, not to impose it, but to exchange ideas and seek the basis for agreement with the aim of finding the best ways of defending and achieving the economic and social demands and the international interests of the working class.' The British unions have a great role to play in giving impetus to this call.

Fraternal greetings to all Trade Unionists from the

AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF BOILERMAKERS, SHIPWRIGHTS, BLACKSMITHS AND STRUCTURAL WORKERS

Let us resolve to oppose with all our might all attacks made on the standards of living of the ordinary citizen and maintain the continuation of a free trade union movement unfettered by legal restrictions.

Daniel McGarvey
President

NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS
(KENT AREA)

New Year
Greetings
to all
engaged in
the struggle
for
Trade Union
Unity

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ENGELS AND THE NEW AGRARIAN CRISIS

Professor Jürgen Kuczynski

'THE Scandal of the Twentieth Century', is the title of the first part of a recently published book by Mouchel and Suret-Canale, *Hunger in the World* (La faim dans le monde). In fact the scandal is much older. Already on March 29, 1865, Engels wrote to Fr. Albert Lange:

> Too little is produced, that is the whole point, but *why* is there too little produced? Not because the limit of production has been reached—even for today and with today's means of production. No—but because the limit of production is determined not by the number of empty stomachs but by the number of purses and what's inside them. Bourgeois society will not and cannot will itself to produce more. The penniless stomachs, the labour force which cannot be utilised with *profit* and therefore cannot make purchases deteriorates into mortality statistics. Let this labour force be employed profitably with the help of a sudden industrial upswing, as happens all the time, then this labour force has money to buy and the means of subsistence can always be found. The whole economy rotates around this eternal vicious circle. One postulates the totality of the bourgeois condition and then proves that each individual part is a necessary part of the whole—ergo an eternal law (Marx-Engels Werke, Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1965, Vol. 31, p. 467).

Even in the then prevailing state of science and technology it was not necessary that millions and millions of people starved. It became even less necessary in a future for which Engels predicted an extraordinary development of agricultural productivity. 'You yourself pose the question, how the population increase can be squared with an increase of the means of subsistence,' the letter continues, and Engels answers the question:

> We start from the premise that the same forces which were created by modern bourgeois society—i.e. steam engines, modern machinery, colonisation on a mass scale, railways, steam boats and world trade (and which today through permanent trade crises brings about its own disarray and eventual destruction) will be adequate in a very short time to reverse the proportion and increase the productivity of each individual so much that he will be able to produce enough for the consumption of two, three, four, five, six individuals. We further presume that urban industry will be able to dispense with enough of its labour force, to be able to turn to agriculture quite different forces from hitherto, and that science will at last be applied to agriculture on the same large scale as it is to industry and with the same result. We also predict that the for us inexhaustible areas of south east Europe and western America, fertilised by nature herself, will be exploited on a totally different and far more grandiose scale than hitherto. When once all these areas have

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been ploughed up, and scarcity still prevails, then it is time to shout *caveant consules** (p. 466).

That each individual employed in agriculture would produce enough for six others was Engels's prediction. Today this prediction has not only been fully realised, but has been greatly surpassed. In the United States every person employed in agriculture produced enough for

3 other persons in 1820
6 other persons in 1900
7 other persons in 1920
25 other persons in 1960
approximately 40 other persons in 1970

But is there less hunger in the world because of this? If anything it has increased! Today milliards of human beings do not get their daily fill and hundreds of millions suffer severe hunger at some time or other throughout the year. But why? For the same reason which Engels so aptly explained more than a hundred years ago. Because the limit of production is determined not by the number of hungry stomachs but by the number of purses and what's inside them.

One hundred and fifty years have passed since the birth of Frederick Engels on November 20, 1820. But the fundamental lessons which Engels and Marx drew from the history of capitalism are as valid as they were a hundred years ago. Then the bourgeoisie declared that Marxism was a false doctrine. Today quite a few bourgeois economists say: Yes, Marx and Engels were right for the nineteenth century, but today in the twentieth century conditions are quite different. These bourgeois economists are as wrong for the twentieth century as were their predecessors a hundred years ago for the nineteenth century. As long as capitalism exists, however much it may have changed in detail, the fundamental teachings of Marx and Engels remain valid including those on the relationship of agricultural production to hungry stomachs.

Recently the German Economic Institute published a study on the European Economic Community agricultural market, the results of which were summarised as follows:

The crisis of the EEC agricultural market which manifests itself on the surface in growing agricultural overproduction, in the perpetually growing financial burdens of the member countries and in the deterioration of conditions of the farmers, has become the central problem for the integration

* Utmost vigilance is the order of the day. Derived from the formula of the Roman Senate: 'Consuls, beware!'

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process in the EEC. Since 1960 annual subsidies for the structural reforms of agriculture in the EEC have more than doubled. The number employed in agriculture, however, has decreased by about a third to ten million. On the individual employee today almost six times more money is spent in price support than in 1960 and around three times more on structural reform. Nevertheless agricultural incomes in the EEC lagged significantly behind the average wage of industrial workers, even though productivity of labour in agriculture rose faster than in industry. The state monopoly agrarian policy is neither capable nor interested in overcoming the contradictions between the state of development of the productive forces and the peasant agrarian structure in the interest of the producer (D.W.I. Berichte, June 1970).

From the multitude of contradictions and crisis factors we shall only deal with one in greater detail: the enormous state subsidies to agriculture. Why is it that agriculture today receives such colossal subsidies in countries where it is relatively so highly developed such as in the US, the UK, and the EEC? The reason is the same for all these countries: modern technology sold by leading industrial monopolies—fertilisers and insecticides from the chemical industry, tractors and other machinery from the machine building industry. To ensure a market for modern technology in agriculture, subsidies are given to agriculture at the expense of the workers, subsidies which in the main find their way into the pockets of landowners and rich farmers.

The higher the technological development of agriculture and the more advanced their level, the higher are the subsidies under capitalist conditions and the more expensive agriculture becomes for the mass of the people. This is a typical contradiction in the state monopoly system of capitalism. How enormous these subsidies, which the EEC calls 'expenditure on structural reform and orderly marketing of products', have grown in recent years, is shown in the following EEC statistics (Agra Europe, Europa Nachrichten, Bonn, No. 32, 1969, p. 2) which also give a prognosis for the next three years.

Development of Expenditure of the European Equalisation and Guarantee Fund for Agriculture EA GFL

Year	DM (m.)	Year	DM (m.)
1962-63	151	1968-69	9,821
1963-64	271	1969-70	12,925
1964-65	857	1970-71	13,253
1965-66	1,280	1971-72	14,098
1966-67	1,975	1972-73	14,316
1967-68	6,110		

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In the sixties alone (since 1962-63) subsidies to agriculture have increased seventy times. By 1972-73 they will be one hundred times as high as they were in 1962-63, an enormous intensification of the subsidy system.

The starting point of our argument was the 'Scandal of the Twentieth Century', the fact that hundreds of millions of people suffered hunger, a scandal about the origin of which Engels wrote more than 100 years ago, a scandal and a serious condemnation of the capitalist system. A hundredfold scandal in view of the fact that the unsold stocks of agricultural products increased at a particularly fast rate in recent years: one only has to look at the following United Nations (FAO) statistics.

Stocks of agricultural products (in m. tons)

Year	Wheat[1]	Other[2]	Butter[3]
1966	29.4	45.0	0.34
1967	31.6	41.9	0.45
1968	37.6	52.8	0.58
1969	55.6	54.6	0.61

[1] US, Canada, Argentina, Australia, France.
[2] Rye, oats, barley, maize.
[3] US, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand.

Wheat and butter stocks have almost doubled between 1966 and 1969 and stocks of other cereals have also increased considerably, while at the same time hunger in the capitalist world is growing. As Engels said, 'Not the number of hungry stomachs but the number and size of the purses' is the decisive factor. And when agricultural production increases but the number and size of the purses stagnate, then obviously under capitalism stocks of agricultural products must increase—and it is quite irrelevant 'whether the number of hungry stomachs are increasing'. That is how capitalism functions today, as it did a hundred years ago when Marx and Engels studied and analysed capitalism and developed the fundamental teachings of the political economy of capitalism. These fundamental teachings are valid, so long as capitalist conditions exist. This does not mean that today's agrarian crisis operates in exactly the same way as earlier crises, as for instance the crisis between the two world wars.

The development of state monopoly capitalism has of course brought new features, sharpened some and flattened out others, all this always to the advantage of the monopolies, as the table below on price developments in the EEC shows (*Statistisches Jahrbuch für Ernährung*, Landwirtschaft und Forsten, 1969, Hamburg —(W.) Berlin 1969, pp. 328, 330). The development was not uniform in all countries, but the general tendency is obvious: prices of

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agricultural machinery and fertilisers produced by the monopolies rose during 1962-68 by approximately ten per cent more than the prices of agricultural goods.

In West Germany where monopoly capitalism developed in its most extreme form within the EEC, we can also see the 'classic' model of this development. Prices of agricultural products dropped by five per cent, prices of the means of production produced by the monopolies for agriculture increased by 23 per cent. No wonder that under such price conditions the 'necessity' for ever larger subsidies for agriculture to secure a market for monopoly production becomes ever more urgent.

The new agrarian crisis is more complicated, more all embracing and more expensive for the working people of the capitalist world including the agrarian population, then any other capitalist agrarian crisis in the past, and any attempt by monopoly capitalism to soften the effects of this crisis operates at the expense of the working class and the farmers.

Prices of (1) agricultural products and prices of (2) means of production

Year	West Germany		Netherlands		France		Belgium	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
1962-64	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1965-66	109	105	112	108	104	103	113	106
1966-67	105	107	113	111	105	103	110	109
1967-68	95	123	109	111	106	105	104	111

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

In no place in this country do the conditions of the workers constitute such a damning indictment of capitalism as in the constituency of Whitechapel and St. George's. Here are found the accumulated evils of generations of sweated and casual labour, appalling housing conditions, mass unemployment, and now increased poverty and destruction due to terrific speeding-up of the dockers, clothing workers, furnishing trade workers, building workers and railwaymen, who constitute the bulk of the working men and women in the area . . .

The experience of canvassers of all parties in the by-election was practically the same as far as the main indication of the present mood of the workers is concerned. Everywhere one was greeted—and particularly in the dock area of the constituency—with cries of 'We are not voting, they are all alike, all out to serve their own ends.' It is one of the greatest crimes for which the Labour Government must assume responsibility that at the very moment when a new offensive is about to commence, such a feeling is rampant amongst workers.

(From 'The Communist Party and the Whitechapel By-Election', by Harry Pollitt, *Labour Monthly*, January 1931.)

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CORRESPONDENCE:

Consumers' Co-operatives and the Future

JACK DUNMAN'S ARTICLE, 'Consumers' Co-operatives and the Future' (*LM*, October 1970) is valuable in showing that the Co-operative Movement is, at the present time, in the forefront of the battle against monopoly capitalism; is engaged in fighting for its life, with vigour and boldness in places; and that this battle for trade and profitability must be won. Some co-operators believe that this battle can be won by purely administrative measures, by efficient organisation, with modern techniques. Some managers are even urging us to forget co-operative principles and ideals as being outdated and of no interest to present day customers. In that it pays almost no attention to the membership side of the movement's problems, the article seems to share that viewpoint.

Many of us working in the co-operative movement believe that the struggle for member participation must be waged alongside the battle for trade. It is not that we are sentimental or not prepared to accept change but the question is will the movement be successful in the business war if the struggle is seen solely in terms of business methods? The capitalists are very skilled and experienced in that sort of competition but not many of them have flourished for nearly 130 years. Membership should be an asset to trade and capital. If it is regarded as a liability there is something wrong with management's business acumen. It is necessary that membership of a co-operative society should retain some meaning over and above that of shopping with the local society, if the movement is to survive.

There are strong reasons for a decline in member interest and participation. Larger regional societies are more remote from the rank and file. Dividend stamps can seriously affect membership and capital. There is an aging membership at co-operative meetings with few successors in view. These are real problems to solve. The article takes loyalty from members for granted but would people continue to see the need to support a trading organisation indistinguishable from a capitalist concern?

If we allow all our energies to be swept along exclusively in the battle for trade we might find emerging a co-operative movement much smaller in size, possibly rating as one of the efficient supermarket organisations but with the name 'Co-operative' meaning as little as it did with that building society which recently changed its name to 'Nationwide'.

IVY WOODS
Bristol

New Year Greetings to Fellow Trade Unionists

ACTT

George H. Elvin
President
Alan Sapper
General Secretary

Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians

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THE SOUTH WALES MINERS and their Families

send warm fraternal greetings
for peace and friendship
to all people working for
peace throughout the world.

SCOTTISH COMMERCIAL MOTORMEN'S UNION

wish all
Trade Unionists
a happy and prosperous
New Year.
Unity will be most important
in 1971 to fight the
iniquitous
Tory Legislation

On behalf of over
30,000 musicians THE
MUSICIANS' UNION
sends New Year
greetings to readers
of *Labour Monthly*

London Co-operative Society Limited

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send
New Years Greetings
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Derbyshire area

extends greetings to all Trade Unionists in Great Britain and throughout the world and wishes them peace and prosperity.

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BOOKS

Socialist Planning: Some Problems
Maurice Dobb
Lawrence & Wishart, 70 pp., 7s.

IT IS HARD to summarise an argument already highly compressed, and still do justice to it. In essence what Maurice Dobb here shows is the organisation of socialist production (its detailed production relations within the general context of social ownership) as a process which develops historically, so that planning methods appropriate to one set of conditions are made obsolete as their very success changes those conditions. In a socialist economy the complex of production, exchange and distribution relations is one which involves the whole collective of owners of means of production, the smaller collectives who work in a particular enterprise, and the individuals who compose the latter. It is people, linked together in these relations, who determine the successful advance of society's productive forces. These relations are therefore the accelerator of, or the brake upon, advance.

Tracing the history of the relation between the centre and periphery, Dobb argues that the traditional methods of Soviet planning were substantially appropriate to the internal and external conditions which existed up to the early 1950s. He then elaborates, from the facts and from the continuous debate in the socialist countries themselves, why changes became necessary. The increasing complexity of production and the higher standard of living, both the fruits of industrialisation and technical progress, made obsolete methods based on a simpler order of priorities. The end to reserves of labour from agriculture (and the consequent shift from 'extensive' to 'intensive' production) made the economy more cost-conscious and raised much more sharply the productive efficiency of the individual enterprise. The upshot was that everywhere the relations between planning bodies and individual enterprises (between centre and periphery) were altered in such a way as to give a greater degree of initiative to the lower levels, while maintaining central constraints upon their behaviour through 'economic levers', of which input and output prices, and charges for the use of means of production, were the most important. New freedom for the enterprise repeats at that lower level the question of relations between its centre (management) and periphery (the body of workers) —i.e. the question of 'industrial democracy'.

Dobb treats the degree to which reforms of a decentralising character have been implemented as a spectrum, at one end of which lie Poland and the GDR, with the Soviet Union rather near to them, with Hungary in the middle, showing some similarity to the economic features of the Czechoslovak Action Programme, which in turn has affinities with Yugoslav methods. While it would be fair to say that Dobb's own sympathies lie rather with the innovators, i.e. the latter half of the spectrum, to put the matter thus baldly is hardly to do justice to the subtlety, care, and concreteness with which he enriches the argument, without sacrifice of the clarity one anticipates in his exposition.

It would perhaps be surprising, when there is strong debate among those most closely involved, if differ-

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ences of estimate did not exist elsewhere. First, two relatively minor points. Since the rate of growth of industrial output depends upon two growth rates, that of the industrial manpower, and that of productivity, would it be surprising, as the extensive period came to an end, that productivity changes alone could not maintain the old growth rate of output? (This is not meant to cast doubt on the general truth of Dobb's thesis, for which, of course, the Czechoslovak decline of 1963 is the most obvious proof.) Second, may not the extent to which a country can replace domestic shortfalls in inputs through foreign trade place Hungary, for example, in a different case from the USSR in respect of the required tightness of co-ordination between internal sectors?

But, at a more basic level, I wonder if all the implications of modern, and future, productive forces have been fully explored. First, does the real initiative for important and continuing productivity increases not lie rather at the level where scientific advance is converted into new designs for new plants, which, not yet being built, can have no management capable of *khozraschot*? Second, do not the specific modern forms of the *social* character of production imply tighter central coordination? Third, is not the tardiness of collection, transmission and processing of complex information, which Dobb regards as a powerful reason for decentralisation, just the area upon which the development of modern productive forces is going to have the greatest long-run effect?

This book is obligatory reading for every serious student of socialism. One hopes for periodic successors to keep us in touch with development and debate.

RON BELLAMY

Problems of Economic Transition: An Indian Case Study
Ranajit Das Gupta
National Publishers, 416 pp., (available on order from Collets)

THE VAST SUB-CONTINENT of India presents a myriad of facets, any one of which can be made the subject of extensive research. But for an overall picture of the Indian situation it is necessary to have a key to the analysis of the social structure and the course of its development and economic and political consequences. In this illuminating work by an Indian Marxist economist, the author finds this key in the concept advanced by Marx in his pioneer account of the emergence and evolution of a capitalist economy, and applied by Lenin in his profound work on the development of capitalism in Russia, namely, the conflict between two possible paths of transition to capitalist relations. Along the first, the really revolutionary path, the producer becomes merchant and capitalist. Along the second, various pre-capitalist methods of exploitation are preserved. The legacy of British imperialism in India, described in detail in the opening chapters of this book, was in many respects analogous to the Russia described by Lenin with its feudal pre-capitalist features and incipient industrialisation and transition to a market economy. Lenin exploded the Narodnik's dream that capitalism would not develop in Russia. In India the Gandhist dream of a village economy without industrialisation was likewise dispelled in spite of persisting lip service to it. Das Gupta gives a wealth of facts and figures, with valuable quotations from Marx, Lenin and numerous authoritative sources, to describe the specific characteristics of the Indian path of development involving a combination and conflict of various

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modes of exploitation complicated also by the influence of foreign imperialism. Anyone who wants to know exactly what has happened during the successive five-year periods of attempted planned development up to 1966 and subsequently, the role and fate of the state sector, the progress and outcome of agrarian reform, the reasons for the present economic crisis and recession, the effect of foreign investment and neo-colonial pressures, will find all this clearly analysed and discussed in this book. The fact that such an eminent Marxist economist as Maurice Dobb has supplied a foreword is a tribute to the merit of the author's work. Pursuing his investigations in every field, the author shows how the parasitic complex of property and privilege relations, linked with neo-colonial influences, has prevented adequate extended reproduction of capital, holds back the advance of the Indian economy and lies at the root of present difficulties.

The danger of such an economic analysis lies in neglecting social and political factors and their consequences. The author has avoided this danger by calling attention throughout to the interaction between economic and political developments. Finally, he devotes an important section of the book to the effect of this interaction in determining the history of the conflicting trends in the National Congress and the various political groupings. This is brought up to date by a last chapter dealing with the critical situation that arose in 1969 and the intensifying conflict between right and left socio-economic forces. The author has carried out an original and fruitful investigation which deserves serious attention. But one must always bear in mind that the outcome in India does not depend only on the mode of transition to capitalism. After all, the last word rests with the popular movement of the great mass of Indian people who are drawn into the revolutionary struggle for democratic freedom and an end to exploitation under the international conditions of the modern world. India plays a vitally important part in the transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale. As Lenin said in his last published article: 'In the last analysis, the upshot of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc. account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe.'

CLEMENS DUTT

Cairo

James Aldridge

Macmillan, 370 pp., 84s.

THE TITLE OF THIS BOOK is simply *Cairo*, but the secondary title, given to it by the dust-sheet only,—'Biography of a City'—is a good description of it. Our great and progressive novelist has turned his hand, and plainly a great deal of study, to writing a long history of a town thousands of years old, one of the oldest towns in the world that are still living towns, which he not only knows well but loves.

The story is a fascinating one, and since it covers so many periods of active history it is varied in its interests, although one cannot call it uneven; there are parts of it that, to a modern reader, are not a great deal better than history which any competent historian could have written, and there are other parts that are politically profound and eloquent with their lessons for today. At all stages the city comes alive under Aldridge's pen for the understanding, admiration, and enjoyment of all of us—including even myself who have few pleasant memories of modern Cairo; and the author never fails

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to give clear Marxist explanations of events. The 'Christian' crusades, their motives, and the behaviour of their participants; the long stages of foreign—especially European—rule; the colonialist and neo-colonialist impositions such as cotton monoculture, and many other colonialist manifestations familiar to many of us, stand out particularly well.

But to my mind the book's main merits are seen when its chronological development brings us to modern times—when in effect the story of Cairo becomes for the time the story of all Egypt. Then we can rejoice in Aldridge's knowledge and perception, admire his judgement, and see the whole rather sad history of modern Egypt in its world setting: the two world wars as they affected the country, the victory of 1952, the events of 1956 and 1957, and the wars with Israel, stand out vividly, all the more so because they are now seen from the Egyptian angle; there is an especially good and objective examination of the 'cases' for both Israel and the Arabs, and the cultural side of the most recent developments is also well pictured. The writer who can treat of all these topics and events with the affection and understanding which Aldridge displays, and at the same time maintain balance and objectivity, could rest content with his achievements; but I hope with confidence that he will do nothing of the sort, but will continue to give us his work.

The book was first published in the US, which accounts for some non-English spellings. It is written with the author's usual happy and sensitive English, with an occasional bit of slovenliness; the illustrations are excellent, but the get-up and typeface are not particularly attractive.

D. N. PRITT

Capitalist Society and Modern Sociology

H. Frankel

Lawrence & Wishart, 296 pp., 65s.

ALTHOUGH EVERYONE AGREES that vast changes have taken place in both British and other Western societies since Marx wrote *Capital*, there is considerable controversy over the nature and significance of these changes. The question is, as Frankel poses it in *Capitalist Society and Modern Sociology*, is Britain 'still fundamentally a capitalist society as Marxists generally understand it'?

Frankel quite correctly approaches the problem by first examining the theoretical bases of a number of views of Western industrialised societies which have in common the thesis that these societies are 'post-capitalist'. Unfortunately, his analysis of the theoretical issues involved suffers from some weaknesses. This is partly due to the fact that his treatment of the 'critics' (as he terms them) of Marx's model of capitalism is not systematic. More importantly, however, Frankel at no point elaborates a Marxist conception of advanced capitalist society. That is to say, he does not make clear what 'Marxists generally understand' by advanced capitalism. This affects the whole of the subsequent analysis of the British class structure which takes up most of the remainder of the book.

The point is that by focusing on the issues raised by the critics of Marx's analysis he allows them to determine the scope of the discussion. Thus the entire analysis of the class structure is aimed at demonstrating the falsity of the assertion that modern British society is characterised by an ever expanding social, political and economic equality. And this Frankel does very well indeed. By pulling together a vast amount of material derived from numerous

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academic and other studies and research reports he exposes a number of contemporary myths about British society. For example, he strikes a final blow at the already discredited propositions that the rich are no longer rich or powerful and that the differentials of income and wealth between top and bottom are gradually narrowing; he assembles much material to demolish the argument that the working class in occupational, cultural, political and economic terms is disappearing; and he throws fresh light on the position of the so-called 'new middle class' (clerks, professions, managers, employers, etc.) concluding that this is 'not a class because it is not a homogeneous body with common interests distinct from other classes . . .'

What emerges from all this is a description of the distribution of wealth and power and the differential position of various strata based on income, occupation, education, status and so on. But the picture is a static one and this stems precisely from Frankel's concern with the critics of Marxism—it is significant in this connection that almost all of the data utilised in the book is drawn from the work of non-Marxist modern sociologists. However, a Marxist analysis requires not merely (and not even mainly) a description of the hierarchical order of the society which is a central concern of modern sociology, but rather an examination of the contradictory processes and relationship of monopoly capitalism which produces changes in the relative position of important groups in the society. Such an analysis would show specifically how the relationships between classes (and strata within classes) affect and are affected by shifts in the conditions of these relationships. In this way it would also be possible to relate the particular political demands that groups pursue to their actual position in the social structure rather than to employ in a simplistic way, as Frankel does, the blanket notion of 'false consciousness'.

Despite these shortcomings, Frankel's book provides an excellent summary of the data on the British system of stratification and will be invaluable as a reference book and for the bibliographical material it contains.

HAROLD WOLPE

Indian Economy: Yesterday and Today
V. B. Singh
People's Publishing House, Delhi
(available on order from Collet's)
182 pp.

DR. SINGH is a member of the Department of Economics of Lucknow University. The first edition of this book, published in 1964, consisted of three lectures given by the author at Warsaw University in 1959. The present edition is virtually a new book in which the chapters on pre-independence India have been revised and the section on 'India Today' expanded and brought as far up to date as the December 1969 Economic Policy Resolution of the ruling Congress Party.

The theme of the book is 'the evolution of India as an underdeveloped country and her post-independence attempt to develop.' The author believes that, left to herself, pre-colonial India might well have taken the road to a capitalist, industrial society, and he deals in detail with the way in which British intervention frustrated this course of development.

Of considerable interest is Dr. Singh's analysis of the economic consequences of the policies of the nationalist movement, especially the campaigns to buy 'swadeshi' (home-

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made) goods. The analysis would have been more revealing had this been linked with the question of the class leadership of the independence movement. The same issue receives scant attention when the post-1947 'mixed-economy' is dealt with. It is true that Dr. Singh points out the contrast between NEP Russia, in which the 'commanding heights' of the economy were in the public sector, and modern India, where a policy in which 'the role of the state was essentially of an auxiliary nature' was adopted. However, the crucial question of which class holds state power is not examined, so that the treatment remains superficial.

Nevertheless, the book succeeds well in its aim of evoking 'interest in Indian economic history' and will also be useful reading for all those interested in the problems of India today.

CONRAD WOOD

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24 St. John Street
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The British in Vietnam
George Rosie
Panther Books, 144 pp., 8s.

THAT THE AMERICANS are the villains in South East Asia is clear to almost all but the British Government. The French, who were the perpetrators of the 'dirty war' until their defeat at Dien Bien Phu, now join in the condemnation of the US bombing. Those who accuse 'perfidious Albion' of inconsistency do less than justice to the British ruling class. Not only does our Government support America in its abominable war, but it succoured France too. Without British armed intervention it is unlikely that the war would now be raging.

The British in Vietnam—How the Twenty-five Year War Began is a timely book. As Nixon escalates while prating of peace, the origins of this struggle are easily forgotten. In a recent trade union visit to North Vietnam, our hosts did not let us forget that without the use of British troops against the Vietnamese the issue of political independence might have been over and won.

The tone of that first attack on the liberation movement expressed in Instruction No. 220 of October 27, 1945—'Always use the maximum force available to ensure wiping out any hostiles. If one uses too much no harm is done'—continued throughout the ensuing twenty-five years with ever growing intensity.

The book is essentially a study of the period of balance in 1945 when the Japanese had surrendered, the French were impotent and the President, Ho Chi Minh, had declared a republic. The only effective government was Vietnamese, and Major General Douglas D. Gracey entered South Vietnam to disarm the Japanese and repatriate prisoners of war. In fact he rearmed the French colonialists, who behaved in traditional fashion:

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'. . . sentries were shot down. Occupants of the building were either killed or taken prisoner. Records were seized and scattered. Scores of Annamites were trussed up and marched off. Foreign eyewitnesses that morning saw blood flow, saw bound men beaten. They saw French colonial culture restored to Saigon.'

As the Vietnamese fought back the Japanese troops were used under British command to drown the independence movement in blood. 'So pleased were the British with the performance of Terauchi's soldiers that, on October 18, British Headquarters thanked the Field-Marshall "with highest praise", for his co-operation. One American eyewitness, Harold Isaacs, reported how "the British were delighted with the discipline shown by their late enemy and were often warmly admiring, in the best playing-field tradition, of their fine military qualities. It was all very comradely".'

The roles of Churchill, determined to re-establish French imperialism, Roosevelt, equally determined to thwart the colonialists, and Truman, whose presidency ended the brief liberalism of America and anticipated the bloodbaths to come, are described in this fascinating and readable account of a forgotten but critical period.

With so little written on this subject it may seem uncharitable to comment on the weakness of this record. The lack in the author of an overall understanding of the nature of imperialism leads him to judgments of individuals rather like performances in a football game. Gracey, liberal, well-meaning but mistaken, Mountbatten, also liberal, sympathetic to Asian nationalism, and so on. It is difficult to understand how the bad men win when the good chaps are not really on their side! (It might have something to do with the nature of imperialism.)

Those who have espoused the cause of Vietnam will find this book enthralling and horrifying. It should be read widely as it exposes the brutality and cynicism which forms an integral part of Britain's consistent policy in South East Asia.

KEN GILL

THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

No. 44 FIRST QUARTER 1971

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Marx In His Own Words

Ernst Fischer

Allen Lane, 188 pp., 30s.

HAVING EMBARKED on hardback publishing, Penguin present us with Marx—'in his own words'. Fischer himself declares: 'We have chosen to let Marx speak for himself . . . The reader has had enough of propaganda.' By 'propaganda' I suppose he means, on the one hand, the sort of simplified versions of Marx reduced to a few dogmas which have from time to time appeared in the past and, on the other, the misrepresentations of him made for their own purposes by his opponents.

Excellent as Fischer's aims may be, it would seem that the title of his book is not strictly accurate; 'Marx half in his own words' would have been more truthful, since at least half is taken up by Fischer's introductory dissertations and subsequent explanations of what Marx *meant* by his words. It seems to me that to read Marx 'in his own words' one ought to read the original works by Marx (not all of which are unduly long or complicated). The sort of selections and abridgements here offered, however well made, are a poor second best. Moreover, Fischer's own words are not always well put together. For example, to explain historical materialism he explains (p. 84) that according to Marx 'the root of man is man himself ...' These are not Marx's own words and, so far as this reviewer can judge, are merely a phrase without meaning.

As an exposition of Marx's essential teachings, illustrated by numerous and extensive quotations, Fischer's book would appear to start well with an account of Marx's original 'philosophical' standpoint, but to become less and less adequate as it proceeds to deal with Marx's views on class struggles, economics, politics and socialist revolution.

Fischer seeks to show that Marx's materialism was not (as 'propaganda' too often misrepresents it) a hard dogma about 'the nature of the material world', but a view of man, the conditions of our existence and the possibilities and perspectives of our social development. But when he tries to follow Marx from the realm of generalisation about the human condition to that of its concrete analysis, then, it seems to me, he gets left behind. Marx 'in his own words' is at once more definite and more subtle than he looks to be from Fischer's generalisations and simplifications. The least successful, most sketchy part of the book is, indeed, that on the economics of capitalism, the theory of revolution, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Where Marx was at his strongest, his Penguin editor is at his weakest.

MAURICE CORNFORTH

African Communists Speak

'Nauka' Publishing House (Central Books), 328 pp., 18s.

THIS BOOK comprises articles and documents from *The African Communist*, the magazine of the South African Communist Party, during the decade of its existence 1959-69. Space being limited, only such materials as deal with issues of immediate reference to the present day are reprinted. All the preparatory work on the collection as well as the selection of materials has been done by the research associates of the African Institute (USSR Academy of Sciences), specialising in problems of Southern Africa.

R. L.

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BIRTHDAY GIFTS

THE response to our November and December issues, as measured by sellers' reports from the November 14 conference, the December 8 Day of Action and sales at various other meetings and gatherings, augurs well for the months leading up to *LM*'s fiftieth birthday.

Copies were sold to those trying to get seats at the Liaison Committee's conference from which so many had to be turned away. In spite of the rush to get into the hall, one of our sellers had delegates stopping to buy during precious minutes as the space inside was rapidly filling up, while others made a point of indicating that they already had copies. More than one delegate was clearly buying *LM* for the first time—quite an unexpected phenomenon showing that not enough is being done yet to introduce it to new readers at union district and branch meetings.

A conference run by the Labour Research Department was covered by one seller as participants filed out at the end. This was another case of rapid selling, as the hall emptied very quickly: she reported four copies sold in four minutes.

With feeling running high on the Day of Action, and with the mood of jubilation at the enormous length of the march through London, getting a coherent account of *LM* sales was not so easy, but comments show that our articles have hit the mark as weapons in the struggle: . . . 'invidious to single out any one contribution,' is the note that comes with one of the donations to our Fund.

We start this month with a Fund total some way below our £100 target, so we ask our readers to throw themselves into an all-out effort. There should be no difficulty about asking for special *LM* birthday gifts during each month of 1971: this too is part of the struggle to defeat the employers and send this Tory Government packing.

Nicola Seyd

£76 12s. 7d.

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The Art of Revolution, edited by Dugald Stermer. Pall Mall, 142 pp., 42s.

Collected Works, Vol. 45, V. I. Lenin. Lawrence & Wishart, 810 pp., 18s.

The Democratic Citizen, Dennis F. Thompson. Cambridge University Press, 272 pp., 55s.

The Hungry Half, Idrix Cox. Lawrence & Wishart, 124 pp., 15s.

The World of the Ranters, A. L. Morton. Lawrence & Wishart, 224 pp., 55s.

Reading Capital, Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar. NLB, 340 pp., 80s.

Marxism and Philosophy, Karl Korsch. NLB, 160 pp., 40s.

Armed Insurrection, A. Neuberg. NLB, 286 pp., 60s.

Problems of Socialism Today, Santiago Carillo. Lawrence & Wishart, 200 pp., 15s.

The Tory Threat to the Unions, O. H. Parsons. Labour Research Department, 28 pp., 2s.

The Economics of Socialism, J. Wilczynski. Allen & Unwin, 234 pp., 30s.

Science, Industry and Society, Stephen Cotgrove and Steven Box. Allen & Unwin, 212 pp., 30s.

The Finance of Local Government, N. P. Hepworth. Allen & Unwin, 342 pp., 42s.

Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary, Giuseppe Fiori. NLB, 304 pp., 55s.

Revolutionary Immortality, Robert Jay Lifton. Penguin Books, 164 pp., 5s.

Red China Today, Edgar Snow. Penguin Books, 750 pp., 16s.

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